

Cal/EPA Environmental Justice Action Plan

Pilot Project Proposal Summary for West Oakland Forum

January 14, 2005

I. Lead Agency: Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)

Area Proposed: The community of West Oakland, Alameda County.

Area Demographics:

66% African American; 16% Latino; 11% white; 7% Asian; 1% Native-American; Mean household income \$35,900, 40% are below the poverty level

II. Background: The community of West Oakland has requested that the various local, state and federal agencies, who are involved in construction or waste cleanup activities, plan and implement their work collaboratively with the community to minimize or eliminate any future health or environmental impacts. This project will evaluate the effectiveness of a “government-to-community and community-to-government” forum which will facilitate information sharing and community involvement regarding cleanup and redevelopment projects in West Oakland, taking particular note of projects that impact children’s health.

III. Project Start Date: May 2005

IV. Project End Date: December 2006

V. Goal & Objectives:

a. Goal: Enhance the community’s role in local, state and federal decisions regarding site-specific activities with the anticipation of a better understanding of community needs and concerns, and a more participative decision-making process. While the forum will deal broadly with these issues, it will focus on projects and issues that have impacts on children’s health.

b. Objectives:

- Provide a forum where agencies and the community can interact on planned or ongoing activities to address community concerns.
- Develop a formal notification procedure to facilitate the community’s right to know about waste sites and proposed activities in the area.
- Assist in the development of a “Good Neighbor Policy” for West Oakland to promote corporate and agency accountability.

- Develop educational materials describing ways to reduce environmental risks for children.

VI. Activities – Planning, Implementation, Evaluation, & Deliverables

Planning

- **Site Selection:** Due to West Oakland’s unspecific boundaries, DTSC will work with local entities, elected officials, community-based groups and residents to define the area of this project.
- **Reduction of Risk to Children’s Health:** 31 percent of West Oakland’s population is under 17 years of age, which represents about 6,000 children. During hearings and in other communications, community residents have complained that poor planning and uncoordinated environmental oversight have resulted in increased risks from exposure to transportation routes, industrial emissions, and toxic contaminants in soils. The Pacific Institute wrote in its Environmental Indicators Project that “West Oakland residents face a high concentration of Brownfields, lead contamination, illegal dumping, and industrial activity.” The health impacts on children are unknown at this time. The forum could assist in developing this information because local and regional health organizations and government agencies will be asked to participate.
- **Cal/EPA Cross-Media Implication:** This project will establish an opportunity for the selected community to interact with all agencies proposing projects in the area that may impact one or more media. DTSC will work with other Cal/EPA Boards, Departments, and Office to identify cross-media opportunities as the project proceeds.
- **Partnerships:** DTSC will formally solicit the involvement of the impacted federal agencies (US EPA, the Agency for Toxic Studies and Disease Registry (ATSDR), state agencies (Cal Trans, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of Health Services, the California Environmental Health Tracking Program, etc.) and local agencies (Environmental Health, Parks and Recreation, the West Oakland Project Area Committee, etc.) for participation in the forum. Local non-government agencies such as the Pacific Institute and planning organizations will be asked to participate as well.

Implementation

- **Methodology & Performance Indicators:** Action items will be identified and tracked during the forum process. The tracking will include a description of steps taken to address community concerns and the impact those steps will have on community health, particularly children’s health. This will be summarized in a report.
- **Public Participation:** Community leaders will be actively sought to participate in this process. Elected and appointed officials as well as residents and community activists will

be contacted. Each contact will receive a description of the forum process and proposed outcomes and benefits, and will be asked if they wish to participate, or if they have recommendations of others who may wish to participate. Also, these contacts will be asked to identify which local, state and federal agencies should participate in this process. The forums will consist of regularly scheduled meetings where agencies and community leaders will meet to identify areas of concern and current activities. Through this coordination, the local agencies and leaders will be kept up to date on cleanup work, health issues, and plans for the West Oakland area. The forum will provide residents and community leaders with advance knowledge that will aid in their participation in each activity.

▪ **Project Work Plan & Timeline:**

	Activity	Start Date	End Date
Phase 1	1. Identify pilot project location(s)	1 st Qtr 2005	1 st Qtr 2005
	2. Define project parameters	1 st Qtr 2005	1 st Qtr 2005
Phase 2	1. Collect project data	2 nd Qtr 2005	2 nd Qtr 2005
	2. Identify project data gaps		
	3. Establish Local Advisory Groups (LAGs)	1 st Qtr 2005	2 nd Qtr 2005
Phase 3	1. Develop Children's Environmental Risk Reduction Plan (ChERRP)	3 rd Qtr 2005	4 th Qtr 2005
Phase 4	1. Implement ChERRP	1 st Qtr 2006	3 rd Qtr 2006
Phase 5	1. Evaluate ChERRP	4 th Qtr 2006	4 th Qtr 2006
	2. Explore implementation options of project	4 th Qtr 2006	4 th Qtr 2006

Evaluation & Deliverables

- **Results:** The key indicator will be the participation of public agencies and community leaders, and the value of these discussions. The tracking of action items and participation will be logged and evaluated. Furthermore, all participants will be polled at the end of one year to evaluate the success of the forum, and to define the impacts. The results can then be used to determine if this method of communication is successful and how it can be applied to other communities with similar environmental issues.
- **Deliverables:**
 - An analysis of survey data and the impacts will be written following the first year of the forum; and

- Educational materials focusing on children's health.
- **Considerations, Anticipated Challenges/Constraints:** Coordinating the many layers of government and community leaders will involve significant staff time. All parties will not agree on the direction and implications of the various issues raised in the forum. Agencies must overcome the significant mistrust of government which exists within this community.

VII. For More Information:

Comments, Questions, or Concerns regarding this Pilot?

Please direct comments, questions, or concerns to:

- via Email:** EnvJustice@calepa.ca.gov
- via Postal Mail:** Cal/EPA Environmental Justice Program
PO Box 2815
Sacramento, CA 95812
- via Phone:** Jim Marxen at (916) 324-6544

Project Contacts:

Pilot Project Contacts:

Jim Marxen
Chief, Public Participation Program, DTSC

Caren Trgovcich
Chief, Statewide Cleanup Operations Division, DTSC

DTSC Environmental Justice Coordinators:

Jim Marxen
Chief, Public Participation Program, DTSC

Vanessa Byrd
Manager, Public Participation Program, DTSC